Transitional Islamic State of Afghanistan
Ministry of Health

Acknowledgments

Protecting the health of the public heavily depends on properly prepared and qualified health personnel who are able and available to meet the community's health needs in all parts of the country. I hope that this policy document will serve as a guiding framework for the development of human resources in Afghanistan to ensure the provision of quality safe essential health services to the people of Afghanistan.

In accomplishing this task, many thanks are in order. Special thanks are due to the World Health Organization who identified the need for development of the human resources development policy for health during the first human resources development situational assessment conducted by the WHO team in May 2001. We are indebted to the valuable contributions of the participants at the national human resources development workshop organized in January 2003 by the Ministry of Health with WHO sponsorship and collaboration of UNICEF, JICA, AKDN, MSH, related NGOs who delineated the recommendations pertaining to the essential elements of the human resources for health policy which was further developed by the HRD Task Force at the Ministry of Health.

This document in its final form has been prepared by the Ministry of Health with technical and financial assistance from the World Health Organization Eastern Mediterranean Regional Office.

The input of all who contributed to the development of this policy document is highly appreciated.

Dr. Suhaila Siddiq
Minister of Health

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___ June 2003

Ministerial Order #______, 2003

Subject: National Policy on Human Resources Development for Health

I. Goal of the Policy

The goal of the human resources development (HRD) policy is to ensure availability of suitably qualified appropriately skilled and motivated human resource for health at appropriate geographic level of pre-defined disciplines, for provision of essential health services of acceptable quality at affordable cost to the community.

II. Principles of the HRD Policy

1. The Ministry of Health recognizes that human resources development is the backbone for national development and that human resources development for health is critical to the provision of health care and the performance of the health system in Afghanistan.

2. The Ministry recognizes that continuous learning is basic to the effective functioning of the Ministry and that personal growth is essential to the well-being of the employees of the Ministry.

3. The Ministry will develop a comprehensive, coordinated national plan for human resources development for health in collaboration with its main partners; the Ministry of Higher Education, the Ministry of Planning, and the Ministry of Work and Social Affairs.

4. The Ministry will govern the process of human resources development for health and will encourage the development of a total work environment that contributes to these principles and goals.

III. Governance

1. A Directorate for Human Resources Development shall be established at the central level in the Ministry of Health charged with the responsibility of all activities related to HRH development, planning and management of all categories of health personnel.

2. Curricula for all types of training and education of health professions shall be standardized at the national level and endorsed by the Directorate of Human Resources Development at the Ministry of Health until such time that the National Health Professions Council is established.

3. Civil service classification and pay scales shall be established to reflect the training and skills of all categories of health personnel to be in accordance with market- driven rates.

4. Posts will be established on the organizational structure of the MOH to absorb the new graduates based on the geographic needs of the country to ensure an appropriate distribution of health personnel to reduce the disparity in health services provision, and to meet the community's health needs.

5. A National Health Professions Council will be established to regulate the practice of the different categories of health professionals and to license, register and accredit health professions education and training institutes to ensure the quality of educational programmes and to protect the public from unsafe practices.

IV. Basic Education (pre-service) of Health Personnel

1. Formal education and training must be directly relevant to the job of the health care provider being developed and the work to which he/she will be assigned in the future.

2. Health professions educational programmes will be developed based on the community's health needs and the competencies expected of the graduates to perform competently to meet the health services needs of Afghanistan.

3. Categories of health personnel developed will commensurate with the needs of the health services and the regional and international trends.

4. Appropriate investments will be made to rehabilitate the health professions education institutions, and resources will be made available to ensure their proper functioning and development.

5. Community – based learning facilities will be developed to cater for the training needs of the different categories of health personnel.

6. Admission to the basic (pre-service) training and education in the health fields shall be based on actual national needs as determined by the Human Resources Development Directorate.

7. Curricula of all health professions schools (medical, nursing, midwifery, and allied health) will include training in the basic package of health services skills.

8. Curricular changes, revisions, development, and training of trainers in the implementation of the revised curricula will be implemented in phases starting at the central level with Kabul, followed by decentralized curricular changes and training at the provincial and district levels.

V. Categories of Health Personnel

1. Eighteen categories of health personnel are required to deliver the basic package of health services launched by the Ministry of Health.

2. The following eighteen categories of health care providers are the ones approved to provide health care services in Afghanistan:

- Medical and Nursing Specialists
- General Medical Practitioners
- Dentists
- Nurses

- Pharmacists
- Assistant Nurses
- Midwives
- Community Midwives
- Dental Technicians
- Pharmacy Technicians
- Laboratory Technicians
- Assistant Laboratory Technicians
- Radiography Technicians
- Anaesthesia Technician
- Physiotherapy Technicians
- Environmental Health Technicians
- Community Health Workers
- Traditional Birth Attendants

3. Non-governmental organizations shall use the national standardized curricula in preparing health care personnel and shall not attempt to prepare categories of health care providers not approved by the Directorate of Human Resources Development at the Ministry of Health.

VI. Admission Policy to Health Professions Educational Institutions

1. Admission mechanisms shall be strengthened and regulations established to ensure appropriate selection of students into the medical, nursing, and allied health educational institutions to ensure the following:

- Reduction in the number of students as well as number of medical schools in the country. The number of students should be based on the educational capacity and resources (financial, clinical and physical) available to achieve quality graduates and practitioners. The number of students admitted to medical and other health science schools should be based on an annually determined and approved number.
- Expansion of health services delivery to rural and underserved areas.

- Quality training of more nurses, midwives, allied health personnel, community health workers, and traditional birth attendants.

- Provision of opportunities for more female enrollment in all educational institutions through out the country, to facilitate a balanced geographical coverage, well distribution of human resources and provision of health services mainly by women to women.

2. Entry examinations for admission into the institutes that prepare nurses, midwives, and allied health personnel shall be separate from entry examinations to the universities in order to promote rational and efficient selection of the students; however opportunities will be provided to the students willing to enter the Institute of Health Sciences through Ministry of Higher Education entrance examinations.

VII. Education of Nurses, Midwives, and Allied Health Professionals

1. The name of the Intermediate Medical Education Institute (IMEI) shall be changed to the Institute of Health Sciences (IHS).

2. The Institutes of Health Sciences all over the country will be reorganized and redistributed to meet the community's needs with the IHS in Kabul being the central campus and the Institutes of Health Sciences in the provinces being satellite campuses.

3. The Institute of Health Sciences and the programmes offered by these institutes will be re-distributed in the country as follows:

- **Kabul**: Nursing, midwifery, dental technicians, laboratory technicians, radiography technicians, pharmacy technicians, physiotherapy technicians, anaesthesia technicians, and environmental health technicians.
- **Jalalabad**: Nursing, midwifery, dental technicians, laboratory technicians, pharmacy technicians, and physiotherapy technicians.
- **Kandahar , Herat, Mazar, Kunduz**, and **Faizabad**: Nursing and midwifery.
- **Helmand** and **Farah:** Prior to making a final decision about the required programmes, an assessment will be conducted to determine the relevance of the programmes.
- **Paktia/Khost** and **Bamyan/Ghazni**: Two new nursing and midwifery schools in one of these two choices of places shall be opened to meet the needs of the community.

4. Entry into the nursing and midwifery programmes will be after completion of twelve years of general education. However during the interim period for the next five years, students with nine years of general education will be accepted in to the Institutes of Health Sciences will be called assistant nurses. They shall be provided with the opportunity to be upgraded to the level of a nurse through an educational career ladder development programme.

5. The entry requirement into all the programmes at the Institutes of Health Sciences shall be the completion of twelve years of general education and taking the entrance examination. The entry requirement with reference to the number of years of schooling in the interim period will be outlined in the procedure guide that will accompany this policy document.

6. The following table outlines the entry requirements with reference to the number of years of schooling and the duration of study of different programmes offered by the Institutes of Health Sciences:

Category	**Entry Requirements**	**Minimum Study Duration**
Specialist Nurse	• General nursing diploma • Rural service • passing of entrance exam	• One academic year
General Nurse	• Successful completion of 12 years of schooling • passing of entrance exam	• Three years plus one year of service (internship)
Assistant Nurse*	• Successful completion of 9 years of schooling • passing of entrance exam	• Three years plus one year of service (internship)

Midwife	• Successful completion of 12 years of schooling • passing of entrance exam	• Two years plus one year of service (internship)
Community Midwife*	• Successful completion of a minimum of 6 years of schooling • Minimum age 18 years • Selected by the community • Passing of selection interview	• Two years plus one year of service (internship)
Dental Technician	• Successful completion of 12 years of schooling • passing of entrance exam	• Two years plus one year of service (internship)
Pharmacy Technician	• Successful completion of 12 years of schooling • passing of entrance exam	• Two years plus one year of service (internship)
Laboratory Technician	• Successful completion of 12 years of schooling • passing of entrance exam	• Two years plus one year of service (internship)
Radiography Technician	• Successful completion of 12 years of schooling • passing of entrance exam	• Two years plus one year of service (internship)
Anaesthesia Technician	• Successful completion of 12 years of schooling • passing of entrance exam	• Two years plus one year of service (internship)
Physiotherapy Technician	• Successful completion of 12 years of schooling • passing of entrance exam	• Two years plus one year of service (internship)
Environmental Health Technician	• Successful completion of 12 years of schooling • passing of entrance exam	• Two years plus one year of service (internship)

* The training of these 2 categories temporarily for an interim period will take place in IHSs

VIII. Continuous Professional Development

1. The Directorate of Human Resources Development at MOH shall establish mechanisms to develop and implement in-service training programmes including standardized curricula to upgrade the skills of the presently working health personnel to enable them to deliver the basic package of health services.

2. Continuing education for approved categories of health care providers shall be standardized to ensure quality and safe health care practice.

3. Educational opportunities to upgrade the health personnel's competence will be made available to employees of the MOH in all disciplines and at all levels dependent upon the needs of the Ministry and the qualifications of the persons to be developed.

IX. Management of Health Personnel

1. New competencies acquired by the health personnel will be closely supervised, monitored, and evaluated to ensure quality of service delivery.

2. The Ministry shall develop job descriptions for all the categories of health personnel.

3. The Ministry shall establish mechanisms of remuneration, promotion, and incentives to motivate and encourage health personnel to work in remote areas to deliver the basic package of health services.

4. The Ministry shall establish mechanisms to utilize health personnel in a manner that is consistent with their skills and competence, and under conditions that promote effective work, ensuring a balanced geographical distribution of health personnel in the country to meet the population's needs.

5. The Ministry shall establish educational career ladders for the nursing, midwifery, and allied health personnel to allow for the career development of this resource.

X. Certification and Licensing

1. After successful completion of the recognized programme of study and graduation from the identified, registered health professions educational institutions, and passing of the certification examination, the health personnel shall be licensed to practice and deliver health care services.

2. The Directorate of Human Resources Development at the Ministry of Health shall be responsible for designing, managing, and sustaining the system of testing and certifying Afghan health workers until such time that a National Health Professions Council is established in the country.

3. The National Health Professions Council shall determine the rules, regulations, and procedures for certifying health personnel and shall establish the minimum educational standards for health professions education and criteria for continuing licensing and registration of health professionals in the country.

XI. Organization of the Directorate of Human Resources Development

1. The Directorate of Human Resources Development at Ministry of Health shall support the overall mission and goals of the Ministry of Health in Afghanistan.

2. The Directorate of Human Resources Development shall be responsible to ensure that effective and affordable workforce is appropriately trained and fairly distributed to deliver the essential health services to reduce health inequities in Afghanistan.

3. The Directorate of Human Resources Development shall implement the Ministry of Health's Human Resources Development for Health policy, shall monitor the implementation of the policy, and shall regularly evaluate the policy and propose further developments of the policy to meet the changing health care needs.

4. The Directorate of Human Resources Development shall implement its terms of reference delineated in the procedure guide that will accompany this policy document.

XII. Procedure guide

The Directorate of Human Resources Development in collaboration with the concerned units at the Ministry of Health and partners shall develop an implementation procedure guide with specific plans of action and a time framework to ensure appropriate implementation of the Human Resources Development policy.

Effective Date

This Ministerial order is effective as of the date of signature and will remain in effect until amended or cancelled by a subsequent Ministerial Order.

Approved By:

Prof. Dr. Suhaila Siddiq
Minister of Health
Transitional Islamic State of Afghanistan

HRD File

Transitional Islamic State of Afghanistan
Ministry of Health

National Policy
On Human Resources Development for Health

